

Strategic Visioning & Master Plan

Vision

Core Values

The City of St. Marys values:

- ⇒ Our environment, including our natural and historic resources and temperate climate.
- ⇒ Quality education for our youth as well as continuing education for life skills, job training, and lifelong learning.
- ⇒ The diversity of our citizens and the importance of the people in all of our neighborhoods.
- ⇒ Our small town atmosphere that is founded in southern hospitality, commitment to helping others, patriotism, and the importance of family.
- ⇒ Access for all citizens to City services, employment, education, and desirable quality of life.

Goals

Economic Prosperity

Support the development and expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community, generate employment opportunities, and contribute to the vitality of the local, regional and global economy.

- ⇒ Waterfront and marshes, climate
- ⇒ Excellent K-12 school system
- ⇒ Small town quality of life, families
- ⇒ Uniqueness - Cumberland Island, Naval Base, Spaceport – brings tourists, Cumberland Island as a unique national park
- ⇒ Proximity to I95, Road and rail access for potential business, Close to other places (Savannah, JAX, airport, JAX attractions)
- ⇒ Educated and experienced populace, Well-educated retiree base, making retirement an industry
- ⇒ Too few middle class jobs and too many minimum wage jobs
- ⇒ Blight (Aesthetics) : Inconsistent code enforcement, lack of regulations to address blight, need for design standards

- ⇒ Tax base not diversified, Dependency on residential tax base
- ⇒ Limited post-secondary education, limited job training opportunities
- ⇒ Insufficient corporate customer base to support local or small businesses
- ⇒ Not perceived as a business friendly city (city procedures are complex, expensive and time consuming), need to simplify rules and regs for businesses, code revisions needed, Streamline government
- ⇒ Distance from Atlanta and lack of attention from State government
- ⇒ Waterfront development including Gateway property, available land and marina potential
- ⇒ Mill site and airport available for economic development
- ⇒ Annexation of various areas into the city to increase tax base
- ⇒ Zoning changes to accommodate new ideas, e.g. tourist cottages downtown, Streamline government
- ⇒ Revitalize Mid-town
- ⇒ Improve food and beverage services, parking and traffic flow to make events more appealing, administrative part of permitting these events
- ⇒ Considering the aging population, seek out health care businesses like memory care and satellite services to supplement the medical services now offered
- ⇒ Be prepared for potential of Spaceport
- ⇒ Eco-tourism and Eco-industry
- ⇒ RV Parks with or without associated uses like bike and golf cart rentals
- ⇒ Possibility of losing exclusive rights to Cumberland Island ferry
- ⇒ Changes in federal and state funding means fewer dollars for local projects
- ⇒ Failure to correct blight will discourage other businesses from coming to town
- ⇒ Failing infrastructure
- ⇒ Drug and related crime issues encroaching from north and south
- ⇒ Population shift to a retirement community
- ⇒ Resource Management

Protect and promote the efficient use of our community's natural, historic, cultural, financial, and human resources.

- ⇒ Waterfront and marshes, climate
- ⇒ Uniqueness - Cumberland Island, Naval Base, Spaceport – brings tourists, Cumberland Island as a unique national park
- ⇒ Educated and experienced populace, Well-educated retiree base, making retirement an industry
- ⇒ High rents and the need for affordable rentals and single family detached housing

- ⇒ Mill site and airport available for economic development
- ⇒ Waterfront development including Gateway property, available land and marina potential
- ⇒ Enhance the historic aspects of downtown, Make better use of our history to leverage it as a tourist draw, not just historic buildings, its also about the community history
- ⇒ Be prepared for potential of Spaceport
- ⇒ Eco-tourism and Eco-industry
- ⇒ Potential of hurricane, flooding or natural disaster
- ⇒ Failing infrastructure
- ⇒ Lack of funding, cooperation and connectivity within the social service and church community will lead to further erosion of help for those in need
- ⇒ Lack of funding will increase Bike and pedestrian safety issues

Efficient Land Use

Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community.

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Local Preparedness

Identify and implement the necessary improvements and programs to achieve our Vision including: infrastructure, regulations to appropriately manage growth; capable leadership and staff, and disaster preparedness.

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- ⇒ Drug and related crime issues encroaching from north and south

Sense of Place

Protect, enhance, and promote the community's unique qualities including the marshes and waterfront, historic downtown, admirable Pre-K through 12 school system, access to Cumberland Island, the future Spaceport and connection to the Navy Base.

- ⇒ Waterfront and marshes, climate
- ⇒ Excellent K-12 school system
- ⇒ Small town quality of life, families

- ⇒ Uniqueness - Cumberland Island, Naval Base, Spaceport – brings tourists, Cumberland Island as a unique national park
- ⇒ Educated and experienced populace, Well-educated retiree base, making retirement an industry
- ⇒ Limited cultural & entertainment opportunities for tourists, residents, kids and millennials, youth and adult activities and centers
- ⇒ Blight (Aesthetics) : Inconsistent code enforcement, lack of regulations to address blight, need for design standards
- ⇒ Confusing informational and directional signage
- ⇒ Waterfront development including Gateway property, available land and marina potential
- ⇒ Revitalize Mid-town
- ⇒ Enhance the historic aspects of downtown, Make better use of our history to leverage it as a tourist draw, not just historic buildings, its also about the community history
- ⇒ Eco-tourism and Eco-industry
- ⇒ Failure to correct blight will discourage other businesses from coming to town
- ⇒ Drug and related crime issues encroaching from north and south
- ⇒ Competing with Jacksonville & Brunswick for new business
- ⇒ Possibility of losing exclusive rights to Cumberland Island ferry

Regional Cooperation

Foster and atmosphere of cooperation with neighboring jurisdictions as well as regional, State and Federal agencies to address shared needs through adequate funding, legislation and technical assistance.

- ⇒ Safe city with limited crime
- ⇒ Proximity to I95, Road and rail access for potential business, Close to other places (Savannah, JAX, airport, JAX attractions)
- ⇒ Local hospital with easy access to top specialty medical care in JAX.
- ⇒ Inadequate public transportation, lack of multi-use trails and bike paths and connectivity
- ⇒ Distance from Atlanta and lack of attention from State government
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Housing Opportunities

Promote a healthy range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing that meets the needs of all residents of the community.

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Transportation Options

Work cooperatively Georgia DOT and Coastal Regional Commission and to address the multi-modal transportation needs, challenges and opportunities for all community residents to provide for safe, reliable, and accessible sidewalks, multi-use trails, bike lanes, transit, and roadways.

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Educational Opportunities

Continue to support the superior pre-K through 12 school system and make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions.

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- ⇒ Be prepared for potential of Spaceport
- ⇒ Youth center for recreation and life skills
- ⇒ Population shift to a retirement community

Community Health

Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, health care, safe and clean neighborhoods, education, healthy food, recreational facilities, cultural activities, and good work opportunities.

- ⇒ Small town quality of life, families
- ⇒ Safe city with limited crime
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Inclusiveness

Work to ensure that all citizens and business that make of the community of St. Marys, feel included in its services, transportation system, recreational and entertainment opportunities, economy, and educational system; and that they feel vested in the future of St. Marys.

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